SELLACK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF ANNUAL ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL
Held on Tuesday 12th May 2026
in Sellack Parish Hall at 8.15pm

The meeting commenced at 8.20pm.

Present: Parish Councillors S. Aitken (Chair), M. Robinson, E. Crowe and J. Marshall (Vice Chair).
In attendance: Claire Vaughan (Clerk).
Residents: None.

1. To elect a Chairperson of the Council and to receive Chair's signature on Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Chairperson, Sarah Aitken welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for nominations for the role of Chairperson.
Cllr Mark Robinson proposed that Cllr Sarah Aitken take up the position of Chairperson and Cllr John Marshall seconded this. As there were no other proposals for Chairperson, it was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Aitken be duly elected to the role. The Chairperson signed the Acceptance of Office of Chair form.

2. TO ELECT A VICE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COUNCIL

Cllr Sarah Aitken proposed that Cllr John Marshall be elected as Vice Chairperson and Councillor Emma Crowe seconded this. As there were no other proposals for Vice Chairperson, it was **RESOLVED** that Cllr John Marshall be duly elected to the role.

3. APOLOGIES

None received.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4.1. The Clerk asked the Councillors to check their Declaration of Interests Form to make sure the information was up to date. All four councillors in attendance confirmed that they had reviewed their declaration of interest forms.

4.2. **To receive any declarations of interest from Members in respect of any matter on the agenda and to receive and consider any written requests for dispensation.**
Cllr S. Aitken and Cllr E. Crowe declared an interest in Item 12.1.3 of the agenda, advising that they reside on one of the roads being discussed. Cllr S. Aitken submitted a dispensation request to participate in any discussion of business for this item, participate further in discussion of business, participate in any vote taken on the business, further vote on the business and remain in the meeting room with the reason given being 'without dispensation transaction of business will be impeded due to lacking number of participants'. Council **RESOLVED** to approve this dispensation request for this meeting only.

5. TO CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30TH MARCH 2026

Council noted the amendment to the Council's Lengthsman claim to Herefordshire Council, recorded under 6.1.1 in the minutes of 30 March meeting. Parish council was overpaid for the Lengthsman grant in 2024-25 by £83. This has been subtracted from the 2025-26 total and a claim of £1686 was made (instead of the initially reported £1769).

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the minutes of the ordinary meeting of Council, held on 30th March 2026 subject to the following amendment being made:

Item 7.1.1.1 – To remove the wording, 'to agree 60cm/2 feet max height of rope to mark breeding areas and any other final specifications or permissions required for this work, including insurance cover:'

The minutes were then signed by the Chairperson.

6. OPEN PUBLIC SESSION

6.1. Resident views: No residents were in attendance but the Chairperson noted that, at the Annual Parish meeting, which took place before this meeting, a resident had raised that a temporary cover had been placed on some drainage works at Sellack Marsh, which Council agreed to note when discussing Item 12.1.3.

6.2. Update from Police Community Support Officer (PCSO): PCSO David Alexander was not in attendance but advised the Clerk, via email, that there had been no reports made to the Police from the parish area in the last eight weeks.

6.3. Ward Member Report: Noted.

7. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM WORKING GROUPS IN 2025-26

7.1. **Backney Bridge Picnic Site and Flood Action Working Group (Cllr John Marshall)** –
Cllr Marshall provided an update report at the Annual Parish Meeting, that took place prior to this meeting.
Cllr Marshall advised that he had taken delivery of the rope and poles and Council discussed having not received a clear response from their insurer on carrying out this work. Following discussion Council **RESOLVED** not to rope off an area of the Common but instead to put up some polite notice signs to encourage users to take care. The wording for the signs was agreed as follows:
'Visitors are kindly requested to avoid disturbing nesting Schedule 1 birds. Please keep dogs on leads and take care when landing kayaks. Thank you for helping these rare birds during nesting season.'
Council **RESOLVED** that the Chair of the Working Group and Chair of Council should meet with the neighbouring Commoner, who grazes the land, to discuss the broken fencing that separates the picnic site and access lane to the common to agree next steps. It was agreed that the Chair of the Working Group would make contact with the Commoner.
Council noted that the contractor had carried out the quoted works but, on the day, carried out some additional, reactive works. The Clerk advised that she would bring the final invoice back to the July meeting of Council, for approval.

8. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM COUNCILLORS AS REPRESENTATIVES OF OUTSIDE BODIES

The Chairperson clarified that the Parish Council does not appoint Councillors to any Outside Bodies and Council noted that the agenda had been incorrectly worded. Council

RESOLVED to remove the item from the agenda and it was agreed to discuss Sellack United Charities at the next meeting, when it can be properly agendized.

9. TO REVIEW WORKING GROUP STRUCTURES, AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO SERVE AS REQUIRED:

9.1. Parish Footpath Officer (PFO) – Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Mark Robinson as PFO for the 2026-27 financial year.

9.2. Backney Bridge Picnic Site and Flood Action Working Group (including appointment of Chair) – Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr John Marshall as Chairperson of the Working Group for the 2026-27 financial year, with Cllr Mark Robinson also being a Councillor Member, with at least one being required to attend meetings.

9.3. Bi-monthly Finance Check / Bank Reconciliation – Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr John Marshall to this role for the 2026-27 financial year.

9.4. Media Representative – Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Sarah Aitken to this role for the 2026-27 financial year.

9.5. Planning Representative (to attend Herefordshire Council Planning Committee meetings, if required) – Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr John Marshall to this role for the 2026-27 financial year.

9.6. Outside Body - Representative Trustees to Sellack United Charities – Council **RESOLVED** to remove this item from the agenda as Council does not appoint Councillors to outside bodies.

10. FINANCES

10.1. To consider the End of Year 2025-26 Finance Report
The Clerk took the Council through the End of Year report and stated that the Council would not be able to claim exemption in 2026-27 due to the drainage and PROW grant funding from 2025-26 being received within this financial year. Council **RESOLVED** to approve the end of year balance sheet, summary of receipts and payments and bank reconciliation and the Chair and Clerk signed and dated these documents.

10.2. To receive and approve the internal audit report for 2025-26.

10.2.1. To discuss the Internal Auditor's recommendations and agree action to be taken: The Clerk advised that the full report had not yet been received but some initial recommendations had been made, as follows:

- Annual review of effectiveness of internal audit to be completed and minuted – Council **RESOLVED** to discuss this further at the July meeting of Council.
- Earmarked reserves to reflect the cost of a contested election – Council did discuss this as part of its budget discussions, in November 2025. Council discussed this further and agreed that, as the parish had not experienced a contested election in some years, that the risk of this occurring seemed low.
- Asset Register to reflect replacement cost for all our items as the basis for any insurance claim – Council **RESOLVED** to review the register at a future meeting, adding a column for replacement and whether an item would be replaced or removed from the register.
- Minutes and Agenda on website to be available as a PDF – The Clerk advised that the advice she had received from the Website developer, was to add minutes as a page to the website, rather than an attached document, so that specific items could be found within the search function. Council **RESOLVED** to add the minutes of

meetings as both a page and pdf document on the website going forward.

10.3. To consider and approve the Annual Return Governance Statement – Section 1. The internal controls set out within the Governance Statement were considered. It was **RESOLVED** that all statements had been put in place and achieved for the past year. Section 1 of the AGAR was signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

10.4. To consider and approve the Annual Return Accounting Statement – Section 2. The Accounting Statements were considered and it was **RESOLVED** to approve them. They were signed by the Chair, having already been signed by the Clerk.

10.5. To confirm the Parish Council meets the criteria for 2025/26 and wishes to claim exemption for that year. To approve and sign the Certificate of Exemption.
The Council confirmed it meets the criteria for 2025/26 and wish to claim exemption. It was **RESOLVED** to sign the Certificate of Exemption.

10.6. To confirm the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights.
It was **RESOLVED** that the dates for the Exercise of Public Rights would be 3rd June – 14th July inclusive.

10.7. To review the clerks delegated authority to make payments between meetings as required.
The Clerks current delegated authority is:
- Any payment up to £500 exc VAT within an agreed budget; or
- Any payments up to £1000 exc VAT in consultation with Chair in case of serious risk to delivery of Council services or to avoid a charge / comply with contractual terms.

Council reviewed and **RESOLVED** to agree and approve these limits for the 2026-27 financial year.

10.8. To review the Council's expenditure incurred under S137 – Council noted that it had spent £205 under S137 in 2025-26, which remains below the legal limit of £11.10 per elector. Council noted that this amount is increasing to £11.60 per elector in 2026-27. *NB: Section 137 (S137) of the Local Government Act 1972 allows Town, Parish, and Community Councils in England and Wales to spend a limited amount of money for purposes that benefit their communities when no specific statutory power is available. This expenditure must directly benefit the area or its inhabitants.*

10.9. To note the VAT return for 2025-26 – Council noted the VAT return amount for 2025-26 is £2,397. The Clerk confirmed that she had not yet submitted this claim to HMRC.

10.10. To review the Council's Bank Mandate
Council reviewed and **RESOLVED** to approve the following mandate for the 2026-27 financial year:
- Clerk able to view account and submit payments for authorisation by two signatories.
- Cllr Robinson, Cllr Aitken and Cllr Crowe can view the account and authorise payments – with two signatories required for each payment.

10.11. To note current bank balance - £23,357. Council noted this figure.

10.12. To note receipt of any income since the previous meeting.
Council noted the following income received:
10.12.1. Herefordshire Council Drainage Grant 2025-26 - £15,035
10.12.2 Herefordshire Council Ditching and Lengthsman Grants 2025-26 - £3,922.90
10.12.3 Herefordshire Council Precept Part 1 2026-27 - £7,250.00

10.13. To note any payments made since previous meeting, under delegated authority.
Council noted the following payments made:

10.13.1 Sellack Parish Hall Room Hire May 2025-March 2026 - £156 (approved at last meeting)

10.13.2 Unity Trust Service Charge (Monthly) - £7.00

The following payments have also been made to our contractor, following receipt of the Drainage and PROW grant funding from Herefordshire Council (as approved at last meeting):

Lengthsman Maintenance Day – InvTGC3678 - £489.30 plus VAT
SPC01 – PROW – InvTGC3780 – £1300 plus VAT
SPC02 and o4 – PROW – InvTGC376 - £1625 plus VAT
SPCDM013 – Drainage – InvTGC3728 - £4124 plus VAT
SPCDM010 – Drainage – InvTGC3761 - £1980 plus VAT
SPCDM12 – Drainage – InvTGC3725 - £2280 plus VAT
SPCDM11 – Drainage – InvTGC3723 - £2500 plus VAT
SPCDM04 – Ditching Works – InvTGC3718 - £1650 plus VAT
SPCDM01 – Ditching Works – Inv: TGC3717 - £600 plus VAT

10.14. To consider any invoices for payment.

10.14.1 Clerk's Salary April 2026 – £425.18

10.14.2 Clerk's Salary May 2026 – £425.18

10.14.3 Donation to Ross-on-Wye Veteran Centre – InvGEN113 - £100.00

10.14.4 Flying Colours Newsletter Printing – Inv15492 - £78.00

Council **RESOLVED** to approve payments 10.14.1. to 10.14.4. by BACs (except for payments to the Clerk, which will continue to be paid by cheque).

10.15. To consider Participatory Budgeting for 2026/27

Council **RESOLVED** to consider proposals as they came in, rather than setting a deadline for suggestions. Council noted that one suggestion had previously been put forward for consideration – orchard trees - and it was agreed to include this on the Forward Plan for discussion.

10.16. To consider any financial risks to the Parish Council – Council noted that a number of recommendations had been made by the Clerk following this year's asset checks and would be picked up under Item 13.5.

11. PARISH COUNCIL ASSETS

11.1. Backney Bridge Picnic Site (BBPS):

11.1.1. To agree dates for volunteer days and working group meetings in 2026/27 – Council **RESOLVED** to hold a meeting of the working group in October and it was agreed that the Chair of the Working group and the Clerk would set dates for the rest of the year.

11.1.2. To finalise arrangements for volunteer day on 16th May – Council **RESOLVED** to hold a walk and talk with an ornithologist and then follow this with a litterpick, if time allows.

11.1.3. To review car park gate arrangements for summer 2026 – Council **RESOLVED** to monitor this over the summer period and, if any issues arise, to lock the gate.

11.2. To consider any potential risks to Parish Council assets – none noted as the Asset Register is on the agenda.

12. REPORTS FROM PARISH FOOTPATH OFFICER AND LENGTHSMAN

12.1. Parish Lengthsman Update:

12.1.1. To approve Lengthsman contract (between Parish Council and Lengthsman) for 2026-27 – Council **RESOLVED** to approve the contract wording and asked the Clerk to share it with the lengthsman for their agreement and signature.

12.1.2. To approve maintenance plan for 2026-27 – Council **RESOLVED** to ask the lengthsman to carry out the four contracted maintenance days in the late Autumn/Winter period.

12.1.3. To finalise Drainage Grant application to Herefordshire Council –

Having declared an interest, Cllr E. Crowe left the meeting room at 9.45pm. Following discussion, Council **RESOLVED** to submit a drainage grant application to Herefordshire Council based on the quotes provided by the contractor, for the jobs the Council had requested at the previous meeting at Sellack Marsh and Lough pool, plus maintenance of the network. *Councillor E. Crowe returned to the meeting at 9.52pm.*

12.2. Parish Footpath Officer (Cllr Mark Robinson):

12.2.1 To finalise PROW Grant application to Herefordshire Council – Council **RESOLVED** to defer this item to the July meeting.

12.3. To review any defects to be raised with and receive updates on work requests from Herefordshire Council – None noted.

13. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES – FOR REVIEW, APPROVAL AND ADOPTION

(can be viewed at https://sellackparishcouncil.gov.uk/policies-and-procedures/)

13.1. REVIEW – Risk Schedule and Register – Council reviewed and **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Risk Schedule and Register.

13.2. REVIEW – Complaints Procedure – Council reviewed and **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Complaints Procedure subject to one amendment – removing the option to email the Chair regarding a complaint, so that all complaints are submitted via the main Council email/address. Cllr Marshall highlighted a number of spelling mistakes, which the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the correction of before the procedure is published.

13.3. REVIEW - BBPS and Flood Action Working Group Terms of Reference – Council reviewed and **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the terms of reference subject to the change in councillor appointments made at the start of this meeting (under Item 9.2) and with one additional amendment – the removal of a requirement for members to sign the terms of reference, with members being asked to confirm they have read the terms at the start of the first meeting of each financial year.

13.4. REVIEW - Equality and Diversity policy – Council reviewed and **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Equality and Diversity policy.

13.5. REVIEW – Asset Register: To review the list of Parish Council assets and recommendations made by the Parish Clerk following the annual visual inspection, made in May 2026 and agree next steps.
The Chair stated that the Register is comprehensive. Council **RESOLVED** to add columns for the Council Lead for each item and Replacement (cost/whether would replace). Item deferred to July meeting.

14. PLANNING

14.1. Council noted the following planning applications received and responded to (under delegated authority) since the last meeting.

14.1.1. Application: 261024 - Land at Caradoc, Sellack, HR9 6LS. Type: Electricity Prior approval
Description: Underground approximately 900 mtrs of existing 11kv overhead line and upgrade of 20 mtrs of existing overhead line from 2 wire to 3 wire.
PC Comments: Support

14.1.2. Application: 260773 - Fair View, Foy, HR9 6RB. Type: Planning Permission.
Description: Change of use from residential care home (Class C2) to dwelling house (Class C3) (no external works)
PC Comments: Support

15. COMMUNICATIONS

15.1. Discuss content for the parish council website and Facebook page, including a review of social media posts – noted.
Council **RESOLVED** to share details on the electoral review on the Council Facebook page.
Council **RESOLVED** to add the newsletter to the website.
Council **RESOLVED** to invite ideas for Participatory Budgeting.

16. CORRESPONDENCE – FOR ACTION

16.1. Electoral review of Herefordshire Council – draft recommendations: to consider responding as a Parish Council. Council noted this correspondence.

17. CLERK'S INFORMATION SHEET AND CORRESPONDENCE - FOR NOTING

Council noted receipt of the following:

- Bank statements
- HALC Bulletins – March and April 2026

18. URGENT MATTERS

To note items arising after the preparation of this Agenda which the Chairman agrees to take as urgent. Such matters will be for noting only or deferral to a future meeting.
None noted.

19. FUTURE MEETINGS:

19.1. To note the forward plan and raise any items for future meetings
19.2. To approve the schedule of meetings for 2026/27. All to take place at 7pm at Sellack Parish Hall:
Tuesday 14th July
Tuesday 15th September (moved from the 8th)
Tuesday 10th November
Tuesday 12th January 2027
Tuesday 9th March
Tuesday 11th May
Plus:
Saturday 7th November 2026 - 10am-2pm (Remembrance Event)
19.3. To consider when to hold the 2026/27 Annual Parish Meeting – Council **RESOLVED** to hold the Annual Parish Meeting on Tuesday 9th March at 6pm, before the March Council meeting.

Meeting closed at 22:00

Signed…………………………… Date………………………